(a) whether his Ministry has asked States to improve child's nutritional value on the mid-day meals quoting different studies, that majority of the children in the country are either moderately or severely underweight;

(b) whether his Ministry have recommended that a child should get a minimum of 450 calories, 12 grams of protein and adequate quantities of micronutrients like iron, folic acid and vitamin A;

(c) whether Ministry of Food Processing Industry have urged his Ministry to allow them to provide ready-to-eat meals as part of Government's Mid-day Meal Scheme introduced in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Nutritional value of Mid-day Meal was revised in June, 2006 based on the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of National Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee of Mid-Day Meal Programme, which *inter-alia* consisted of nutritional experts, and selected State Government representatives.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) In view of (c) above, does not arise.

Rural children in IT enabled education

2749. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the rural children do not get exposure to IT enabled education both at the elementary and higher level of education;

(b) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken by Government to bridge the gap in the education system between the rural and urban children; and

(c) whether Government would make specific allocations for this purpose in the Eleventh Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

At Elementary level, Computer Aided Learning, a component of the Scheme 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)' is being implemented in an effort to improve the quality of education both in rural and urban areas.

At Secondary level, a Scheme called 'information and Communication Technology (ICT) @ School' is being implemented by this Ministry that aims to bridge the digital divide. It provides a level playing field to school students, whether in rural areas or in the metropolitan cities. This Scheme is not a stand-alone scheme but actively solicits the partnership of States, Union Territories & other organisation in a mutual endeavour to bridge the heterogeneous proliferation of ICT across different socio-economic and geographic segments in the country. In addition, the Ministry has already launched a One Stop Education Website portal called Sakshat to cater to all types of educational requirements of learners in both rural and urban areas. Programmes beamed through Edusat Satellite and other distance learning courses run by IGNOU cater to the IT related needs of rural children and students also. In the 11th Plan Working Group Reports, steps are being identified to mount research efforts to make available very low cost computing and internet access devices, connectivity for rural areas, digital literacy and virtual laboratories etc. The financial projections for the 11th Five Year Plan are still under process.

Understanding the concepts by students

2750. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent survey that shows that the students appear to be learning mechanically rather than by truly understanding the concepts; and

(b) whether Government would consider restructuring the whole education system so that students improve their skills independently developing this inherent intellectual aptitude?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is aware of a survey on the learning and performance of students in schools in India, published recently in a magazine.